

AN  
End of one VVonder:

OR

A brief Account, in an Epistolary  
Way, of the Proceedings of a few Christini-  
ans, of the Parish, and some of the  
Church, of *Staplehurst* in *Kent*,

Lying formerly under many Burthens, and  
lately prosecuting an opportunity, by Pro-  
vidence put into their hands, of  
Free Communion.

For which they, and the Way and Work of  
Christ in their hands, have been undeservedly  
scandalized, and many Christian Friends  
that looked on them with a benign  
Aspect, unduly discouraged.

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1 COR. 9. 3. 15

*My Answer to them that do examine  
me is this: —*

1 COR. 7. 21.

*if thou mayst be made free, use it rather.*

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London, Printed in the Year, 1651.

March 17, 1900

Dear Sir,

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 14th inst.

and in reply to inform you that the same has been forwarded to the proper authorities.

I am, Sir, very respectfully,  
Yours truly,  
J. B. [Signature]

Very truly,  
J. B. [Signature]

Very truly,  
J. B. [Signature]

Very truly,  
J. B. [Signature]

Wm. B. [Signature]



*To the Inhabitants, Parishoners of the  
Parish of Staplehurst in Kent, fre-  
quent Hearers of the Word of Christ,  
as ministred in the small Assembly or  
Church of the Saints there.*

*Dear Friends, Beloved and longed after in the bowels  
of J E S U S C H R I S T ;*

**T**hat you may prosper, your Souls may prosper, and be  
in health through the *Gospel and grace of Christ*; as  
also that the Gospel, the Word of the Lord, may  
have free course, and be glorified with you, is upon  
my heart, not only to seek and wish earnestly for, from the *Fa-  
ther of Lights*; but also to endeavor and labor after with that  
streight diligence and faithfulness, that *the measure of the grace  
given doth afford*: In so much that I am not, neither have been,  
unwilling to spend and be spent for you. Perhaps you will say,  
*Not for you, but for others*. But I say, and say truly, *For you*.  
For you are part of my rejoycing, as joy is in hope, hoping con-  
cerning you, that there are among you those wandering sheep,  
which *Jesus Christ* will yet vouchsafe to bring to his Fold. I con-  
fess, and I rejoyce in it, I have first eyed of what use I may be  
to those few among you, which God hath left, after the shaking  
of the Olive Tree, as a poor and an afflicted people, to trust in him,  
and to bear his Name. My desire, and my endeavor is, with no  
small striving, That they may be kept and used by the hand of  
*Christ* to bear his burthen, to bear witness to his Truth and  
Ways, and to bring forth many children to the glory of *Christ*  
their Husband, and the joy of their own hearts. Indeed they

are a Zoar, a little one, they are a remnant. Yet behold this remnant shall be brought forth, yea they shall come forth unto you, and ye shall see their way, and their doings: And they shall comfort you when ye see their way, and their doings; and ye shall know that the Lord hath not done without cause, all that He hath done in them: (Ezek. 14. 23.) Wherefore my eye hath been to you ward also, as to those who are in due time to partake of the comforts and the joyes of Saints, to see the goings of the Lord Jesus in his Sanctuary, and to be gathered to his holy ones, that make a Covenant with him by Sacrifice. These are my longings, these are my strivings, this is my service to you ward, even to you ward, in whose eyes I seem as a stranger. Possibly you may as yet reap little fruit of these good wishes, see little success of my service; and therefore you may have little cause of returning much good will to me again. You may have just ground of judging meanly of a poor worm, as I am, one that is nothing; less then the least of the mercies of God. This I can bear with some delight, and more profit, learning thereby not to think of my self more highly then I ought to think.

My dear Friends, I could lie at your feet, I could bear your discontent, I could take welcomly your dislike, I could be your common Servant, could or did I by this means serve Christ. But when Christ comes by dishonor, the Gospel is endamaged; when through my poorness your displeasure reaches to that which is higher, reflects on that which is greater then men, the Truth of God, this pinches; this opens the mouth that would more willingly abide silent.

Quest. But what complaint is this? whence or by whom is this evil committed? Christ dishonored? the Truth endamaged? how comes this about?

Ans. There are surmises, there are reports, there are rumors, sent abroad the Country. The Truths, the Ways, the Saints of Christ do suffer by Relations spread abroad by some one: I accuse none; I intend onely to excuse the innocent: I am bold to say, concerning my self, and those that have joyned with me in the Gospel, I trust we have a good Conscience, and desire to live honestly: However we cannot attain the mercy of good report abroad.



Men say abroad, *I am an Intruder, and have thrust my self upon the Parish without their consent.*

This is a great crime : But how is it proved ? For first of all, 'tis a disputable question, whether a Parish, *quâ* a Parish, have right of choyce of their *Minister* or *Preacher* : That a *Church* have right. is as undoubted. But I suppose a *Parishoner* and a *Church member* are different Relations. This is a question would ask some deliberate discuss : And if any will undertake it, I would desire him to give some return to a neighboring question, *sci.* How far the *Magistrates Interest* doth reach in promoting and furthering the Gospel in Parishes ? Then secondly, How could I intrude upon the Parish, seeing I came in by *Sequestration* ; and so by the strong endeavors of the *Parishoners*, by *Petition* and otherwise to the *Committee for Plundered Ministers* ? Perhaps it will be said, *I had the hands of but a part of the Parish* : I demand, *Who ever had more* ? Is it iniquity for a part of a *Parish* well affected to call a *Minister*, and present him to the *Magistrate*, and for that *Minister* to accept of that Call, and to Minister in the *Parish* by the *Magistrates* allowance ? Is this Iniquity ? How many of the godly of this Nation, both *Ministers* and people, have this guilt upon their heads ? But it will be said, *That I had not the Approbation of all the Godly.*

*Ans.* I answer, The Content of all the Godly may be wanted in some cases, as rightly as of all the *Parish*. But 'twill be proved with little difficulty, that I had the Content of all the godly in the *Parish* in the first promotion of the *Petition & Prosecution* of the Order upon it ; understanding by *Godly*, the sound of Judgment in the *Parish* ; and understanding by *Consent*, non opposition, or after-approbation.

As the godly approved of the Order for *Sequestration*, as gotten by those that stirred, and also of my preaching thereupon for a time.

But I know it will be demanded, *By what Rule we who are a small number of the Parish can justify this wresting of all the Priviledges of the Parish into our hands, to the prejudice of others truly godly that cannot walk with us in our way ?*

I answer : 1. The way we walk is not ours, but Christs, and theirs, if they be Christs, and that they walk not with us in it is not our fault ; but that is not the Question. 2. I demand, whether those that are thus godly would-not have done the like by

us? But, 3. I answer, That we are far from any violence in the business: Therefore I offer, and have offered, as is well known; 1. Let the godly of the Parish, both that I am related unto with others, unite together joyntly, and chuse themselves a Minister, and I am ready to give place. 2. Otherwise let those of the Parish that are not satisfied with the way and Ministry held forth, joyn among themselves to chuse a Minister; they shall have the Liberty, so far as to us, of half the time on Lords days, and half the maintenance.

Perhaps some will demand, By what Rule I can exact maintenance, beyond what those that are in fellowship with me, or profited by my Ministry, shall willingly give?

I answer: I wil accept of this on these conditions: 1. That I may be secured, that those that contribute to me, of what ever Parish, shall be charged with paying to none else: And 2. That the charges laid on Ministers maintenance be taken off. 3. That I may be at liberty in point of Ministry, i. e. not engaged to a constant service, as of preaching every Lords day, further then I shall be engaged and encouraged by them that contribute. There is no reason I should be engaged to serve them constantly, that deny or withhold due encouragement. 4. Which I need not mention, That I may have the liberty of the common meeting place, for the performance of such services as those that encourage me shall call me unto according to Christ, and that the charges we have been put unto in this business may be discharged. On these conditions I will satisfiedly accept of that maintenance those that are joyned in fellowship with me, or profited by my Ministry, shall freely give.

Here some one will aptly urge, (for men now adays lie at the catch) Then you will take the maintenance as now settled, by way of Tythes, until it be altered.

Ans. I answer: This indeed is a second principal scandal that I am bespattered withall abroad, viz. that I am changed in my Principles, and am turned Tyther: But the men that have formerly known me, might know, if they list, that I am not changed in this behalf; but men are resolved to know nothing that makes for the Justification of Wisdom. That which was my Principle and Light of old in this business, is this in one word; That 'twas



'twas my liberty, as well as sometimes my duty, to preach the word of Christ to a Parish in the common place of meeting; and to take for my encouragement and enablement, as a man, what honest men of the Parish could fairly get, whether this or that way 'tis alike to me. By this Rule I walked in *Kent* almost seven years ago, with the approbation of the godly then; and that this is criminal now, doth indeed shew a change; but where? As to the Question concerning Tythes, I may possibly in due time speak a word in another way. 'Tis supposed they will not be long lived: Let them go the way of all Church-livings, I will never wear mourning for them. Though I dayly beg of God, that he will continually shew and convince the Parliament of the necessity of continuing and encouraging a preaching Ministry in the Nation, with the manifest evil of the contrary, which is manifestly the white the present Ring-leaders in the quarrel about Tythes do chiefly aim at. But *stat voluntas sui*: A Ministry is more Gods and Christs, then mens, then the Parliaments, *et Deus Providebit*.

In the *interim* we force no body to pay. If the State lay Charges upon the place upon the account of the old Settlement, I suppose it must be discharged by some body; and I think we have little reason to lay it upon our friends that freely concur with us, and I think as little reason to lose our Liberty, through the neglect thereof, to gratifie those that wish us not prosperity, nor will give us thanks for our courtesie.

Lastly, I desire you to take notice, that I intend to ease my self of the Sequestration, by committing it to some other, so far as may stand with our Liberty, and so soon as I have by due means endeavored your satisfaction therein.

Dear Friends, I have in all this but discharged my duty to you, to wit, endeavored to take off prejudices, that my self, honest men and the Truth do lie under in your eyes. There are many more crimes, as men call them, charged upon me. But they are such as are either my duty or liberty, therefore I shall not trouble you and others with the rehearsal of them; though indeed I had intended to have spoken to one or two. As to Ordination, which some say I want, and the administering of Baptism to children, whose Parents one or both are not actually in Church-communion.

nion, which to me is disorderly ; but I perceive I should hereby augment my Epistle beyond a *Mediocrity*, therefore I wave them.

Perhaps I may meet them some other way. I shall detain you no longer : The Lord shew you what is Truth, what is Righteousness, what is his Will towards you in this matter.

I had intended to have annexed hereunto, or rather prefixed this to, a small Tract, being the sum of certain Sermons preached to you at my first entrance into this, commonly called, publique way among you, on *Ephes. 1. 10. Mat. 11. 19. Job 9. 4.* But for some Reasons I forbear its publication at present. If preaching, writing, printing, any thing, would do your Souls good, so far as to that little ability the Lord hath given me, I am so well acquainted with my spirit, that I can say, I should earnestly pursue and endeavor it. How far this will succeed to the ends intended, to remove prejudices, rectifie understanding, reconcile differences, unite affection, how this may serve to those ends, I refer to Christ and his Spirit. Once more I'll beg, The Lord give you Light to see what is his Truth and Mind in all things, Love to embrace what you see, Patience to wait for that you enjoy not, and Peace to walk with those that hold the Truth ; Hope for Glory, and desire to serve you in the Gospel of Christ.

Yours to love and serve

May (or the third  
Month) 30. 1651.

you, as you accept of

him in CHRIST,

*Tho. Bague.*

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FINIS.



South E. ...  
and reject the Talmud, still exist in

... for he was never a good corner -